

Steven Corliss  
35 Beths Avenue, #54  
Bristol, CT 06010

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR NURSING**

State of Connecticut  
Department of Public Health

vs.

Steven Corliss, LPN  
Licensed Practical Nurse License No. 020592  
Respondent.

CASE PETITION NO. 970616-011-017

MEMORANDUM OF DECISION

**PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

The Board of Examiners for Nursing (hereinafter the "Board") was presented by the Department of Public Health (hereinafter the "Department") with a Statement of Charges dated August 15, 1997 (Department Exhibit 1). The Statement of Charges alleged violations of certain provisions of Chapter 378 of the General Statutes of Connecticut by Steven Corliss (hereinafter the "Respondent") which would subject the Respondent's Licensed Practical Nurse license to disciplinary action pursuant to the General Statutes of Connecticut.

The Board issued a Notice of Hearing dated September 3, 1997, scheduling a hearing for October 15, 1997 (Department Exhibit 1).

The hearing took place on October 15, 1997, in Room 2-A, Legislative Office Building, Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

The Respondent was present during the hearing and was represented by counsel. (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, pp. 2-3)

The Respondent submitted a written answer to the Statement of Charges. (Department Exhibit 1)

Each member of the Board involved in this decision attests that he/she was present at the hearing or has reviewed the record, and that this decision is based entirely on the record, the law, and the Board's specialized professional knowledge in evaluating the evidence.

### **FACTS**

Based on the testimony given and the exhibits offered into evidence, the Board makes the following Findings of Fact:

1. Steven Corliss, hereinafter referred to as the Respondent, was the holder of Licensed Practical Nurse License Number 020592 at all times referenced in the Statement of Charges. (Answer: Respondent's Exhibit A-1)
2. Beginning on or about November 1996, the Respondent was employed as a licensed practical nurse at St. Mary's Hospital, Waterbury, Connecticut. (Department Exhibit 1, p.9) (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, p. 10)
3. From on or about February 1997 to June 5, 1997, while working as a licensed practical nurse at St. Mary's Hospital, the Respondent diverted for his own personal use the controlled substances Morphine, Dilaudid and Demerol. (Department Exhibit 1, pp. 4-11) (Answer: Respondent's Exhibit A-1) (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, pp. 32)
4. While working as a licensed practical nurse at St. Mary's Hospital, the Respondent falsified controlled substance administration records. The Respondent documented that the medications he diverted for his own use had either been "wasted" or had been administered to patients. (Department Exhibit 1, p.10)

5. The Respondent abused and/or excessively used the controlled substances Morphine, Dilaudid and Demerol which he diverted from St. Mary's Hospital. (Department Exhibit 10-11) (Answer: Respondent's Exhibit A-1) (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, p. 33)
6. The Respondent has a history of substance abuse since the age of ten. The Respondent had prior substance abuse treatment on or about 1979. (Respondent's Exhibits A-3, B-underseal) (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, pp. 11-18)
7. From June 12, 1997 to July 2, 1997, the Respondent underwent out-patient chemical dependency treatment at The BlueRidge Center, Bloomfield, Connecticut. Since July 8, 1997, the Respondent has attended the Continuing Care Group for Health Care Professionals at The BlueRidge Center. The Respondent has been actively participating in Alcoholics Anonymous Narcotics Anonymous since June 1997. (Respondent's Exhibits A, B-underseal)
8. The Respondent has not has not been employed as a nurse since June 1997. (Respondent's Exhibit A-3) (Hearing Transcript, October 15, 1997, pp. 24-25)
9. The Respondent's substance abuse Treatment Coordinator is of the opinion that the Respondent should not return to the practice of nursing until at least one year of recovery has been achieved. (Respondent's Exhibit A-2)

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In consideration of the above Findings of Fact, the following conclusions are rendered:

Respondent's Name held a valid licensed practical nurse license in the State of Connecticut at all times referenced in the Statement of Charges.

The Notice of Hearing and Statement of Charges sufficiently provided legal notice as mandated by the General Statutes of Connecticut §4-177, §4-182 and §19a-17. The hearing was held in accordance with

Chapters 54 and 368a of the General Statutes of Connecticut as well as §19a-9-1 through §19a-9-29 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

The Notice of Hearing, Statement of Charges and the hearing process provided the Respondent with the opportunity to demonstrate compliance with all lawful requirements for the retention of his license as required by the General Statutes of Connecticut §4-182(c).

The Department bears the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence in this matter.

PARAGRAPH 3 of the Statement of Charges alleges that from on or about early May 1997 to at least June 5, 1997, while working as a licensed practical nurse at St. Mary's Hospital, Waterbury, Connecticut, the Respondent:

- "a. diverted the controlled substances morphine, Dilaudid and/or Demerol; and/or,
- b. failed to completely, properly and/or accurately document medical and/or hospital records."

PARAGRAPH 4 of the Statement of Charges alleges that in 1997, the Respondent abused or excessively used controlled substances including morphine, Dilaudid, and/or Demerol.

The Respondent admits the charges in Paragraph 3 to the extent that said conduct did not occur subsequent to June 5, 1997. The Respondent admits the charges in Paragraph 4 (Answer: Respondent's Exhibit A-1)

The General Statutes of Connecticut §20-99(b) prohibits conduct which fails to conform to the accepted standards of the nursing profession, which includes "... (2) illegal conduct, incompetence or negligence in performing usual nursing functions... (5) abuse or excessive use of drugs, including alcohol, narcotics or chemicals... (6) fraud or material deception in the course of professional services or activities...."

Based on its findings and the Respondent's admissions, the Board concludes that the Respondent's conduct as alleged in Paragraph 3, to the extent that said conduct did not occur after June 5, 1997, and

Paragraph 4 of the Statement of Charges is proven. The Board further concludes that said conduct constitutes violations of the General Statutes of Connecticut §20-99(b)(2)(5) and (6). Therefore, the Respondent is subject to disciplinary action pursuant to §19a-17 of the General Statutes of Connecticut.

**ORDER**

Pursuant to its authority under §19a-17 and §20-99 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, the Board of Examiners for Nursing hereby orders the following:

1. That for Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Statement of Charges, the Respondent's licensed practical nurse license, No. 020592, is revoked effective the date this Memorandum of Decision is signed by the Board of Examiners for Nursing.
2. At any future time should the respondent request reinstatement of his licensed practical nurse license, he shall have the burden of presenting relevant evidence to the satisfaction of the Board that he is able to practice nursing with reasonable skill and safety.

The Board of Examiners for Nursing hereby informs the Respondent, Steven Corliss, and the Department of Public Health of the State of Connecticut of this decision.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut this <sup>4<sup>th</sup></sup>~~18<sup>th</sup>~~ day of <sup>March</sup>~~February~~ 1998.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR NURSING

By

